

HOPSTREET
GALLERY
BRUSSELS

VERONICA BROVALL

I'M YOUR MAN

11 September – 31 October 2015



Front: Across a Back
Left: I'm your man
Right: Climb Inside



Across a back, 2015
glazed ceramic, tempered and powder coated steel with plint
87 h x 85 x 85 cm



Left: I'm your man

Right: Climb Inside



I'm your man, 2015
glazed ceramic, powder coated steel, digital print on aluminium, screws
113 h x 118 x 51.5 cm



Left: Climb Inside
Right: Work the street alone



Left: Climb Inside
Right: Work the street alone



Climb Inside, 2015
powder coated steel,printed aluminium plate,screws
166.5 h x 116 x 227 cm



Work the street alone, 2015
tempered and powder coated steel, glazed ceramic
105 h x 176 x 46 cm



You know you can, 2015
glazed ceramic, tempered and powder coated steel
94 h x 31 x 56,5 cm



Left: Like a dog in heat
Right: Strike down



Right: Like a dog in heat
Left: Beast won't go to sleep



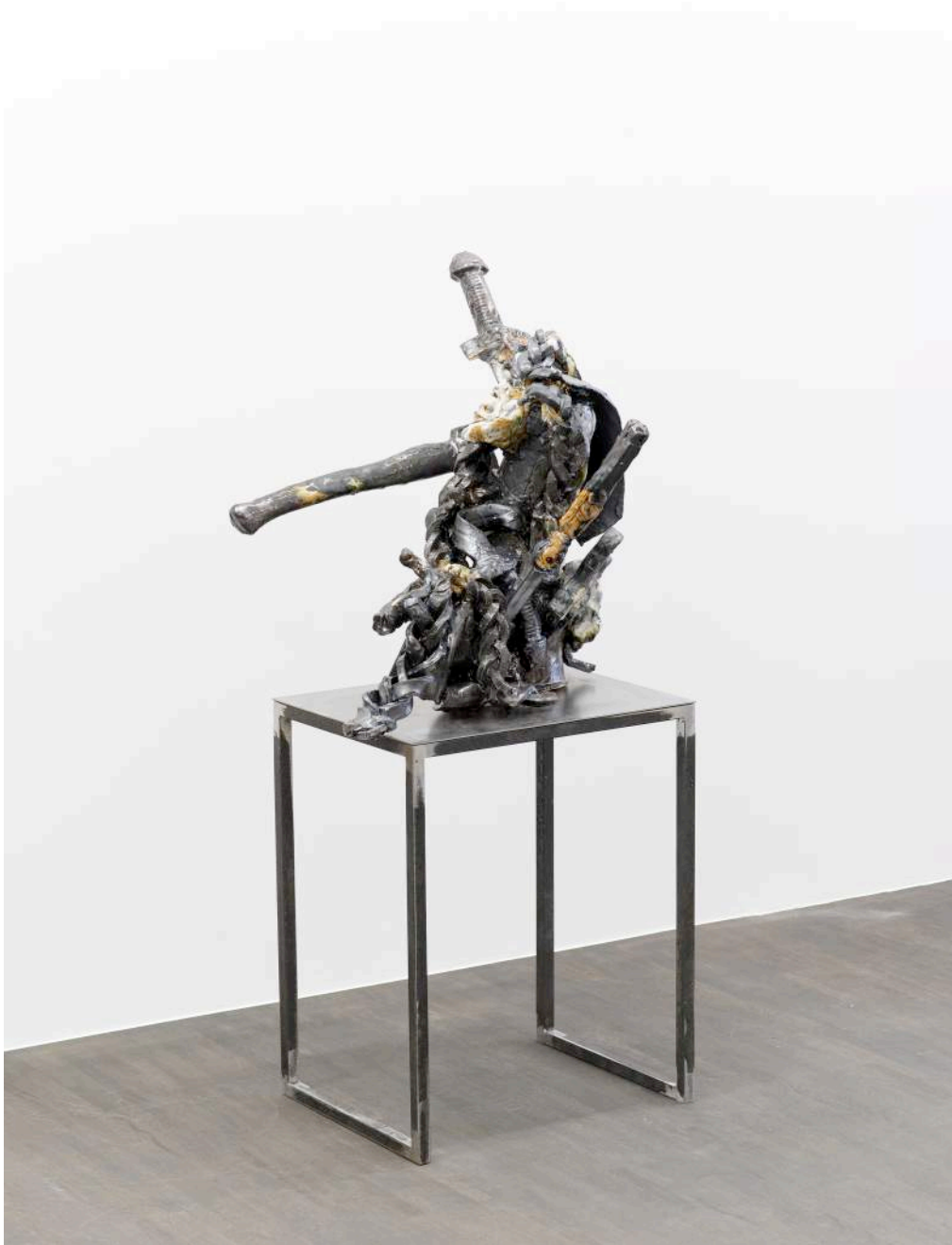
Like a dog in heat, 2015
glazed ceramic, powder coated steel plint
105 h x 95 x 86 cm



Strike down, 2015
glazed ceramic, powder coated steel
75 h x 75 x 18 cm



Beast won't go to sleep, 2015
glazed ceramic, powder coated steel, digital print on aluminium
97 h x 67 x 23 cm



Chains too tight, 2015
glazed ceramic, pedestal steel
55,5 h x 58 x 55 cm

DEAR HUNTER

Dear post-humane people, it has happened. Veronica Brovall has captured a rear-view mirror in the new media technology of ceramics. The Al-Namrood (Nimrod) trio from Saudi Arabia effortlessly combines Scandinavian *heavy metal* with rhythmic dance music from the Middle East: violence as rage. A self-expression transformed into music pitches into the brain like masculine venom. 'Nothing comes closer to sticking to the skin than this feeling of resentment,' said a man to me via a woman. Neither of them wanted to add anything to my request that became a story and was photographed on tape. Veronica Brovall, from Sweden but working in Berlin, shows in her sculptures how systematic violence pitches into women without showing a female body. Therefore she doesn't show a male body. The axe pitches into the rungs of a climbing frame, as if the rungs were trees in a forest for children. Brovall refers to symbols like the sword and the tie, which can be associated with masculinity. She transforms them into a flesh-coloured landscape in glazed ceramics. With some fantasy, limp and half-erect penises can be recognised. Sometimes systems castrate men. They easily feel castrated by women. They are so *soft*, madam, with all their *cool or attitude*. Systems divide women. Women 'pass' by men. Men sometimes 'pass' by each other. It's not that *female bonding* doesn't exist, but there was almost never time to make things fall into place. This isn't a deficiency that breaks loose by default. Religion and modernity resemble each other too much when it comes to interests. Creating distance is an alienating gesture. There is obviously a difference between (going along with) an illusion and a misunderstanding. Just like dance music, *black metal* can bring relaxation and calm to a pacifistic person who is slightly frustrated from all that violence and is under stress. Even though some might think that sounds just as loud as a groom, self-control is maintained. Someone suddenly saw *The quick and the death* in the bookcase of someone else: *crime fiction*. Crime is fiction. Before you know it, a 'western' with marksmen in tow come out of a holy book. I am alive and kicking. A glass of wine transforms into water, becomes frightened and flows up a mountain. It was a woman who murdered the tyrants, so that you could exist, could travel, could write your letter. All that acceleration in philosophy. It is true; I have never encountered a radical imagination or thought. After all, that doesn't imagine or think. That is clearly not blind, but rather deaf or dumb. I wouldn't dare call it wisdom, much to my regret. Neurons, my brain is wearing out in the universe that is rediscovered by a spacecraft (or is it a missile?).

Listening to Leonard Cohen can, under a certain darkness of events, turn out to be remarkable. No human escapes nothing. The title of this exhibition is "*I am your man*". Veronica Brovall objectifies *I am your man* in an Ana Mendieta-like *Silueta*, but it's not a reference to the artist's body. It concerns the girth of a male dwarf with swords stuck in his back. The swords form a wreath or aura for a surrendering body image; as if it were an extinct erection, a sieve. Now there is room to talk about the *homme enfant* and the *homme fatal*. You won't get away with projection this time, mister. You are addressing someone who was urged to duplicate herself on the beach of the swimming butcher. In the meantime something was discovered, according to a few inspecting artists, for example Michael

Rakowitz, with (songs by) Leonard Cohen. Evidently, according to a few better informed sources, it is connected to the army. Army cars are matt in colour and the army asked – so I recently gathered in a conversation – whether the roof covering could be even more matt. I loved her driving style. She never drove against the traffic as a (g)host. She will outlive all my wars and peace treaties. Or so I thought. Not that she was given the choice. Nor was the world given a choice. They never hated men, but let's remain polite: *fuck* (with) all that violence. A human being cannot die at the drop of a hat and reincarnate like bears in the forest or snakes that you will catch in *science fiction* while they hang themselves on each other. So *fuck you, fuck me* and *fuck Leonard Cohen* too. This is the law you talk about? After all, the lyrics of the Leonard Cohen song go like this:

"If you want a lover, I'll do anything you ask me to. And if you want another kind of love, I'll wear a mask for you. If you want a partner, take my hand. Or if you want to strike me down in anger, here I stand. I'm your man. If you want a boxer, I will step into the ring for you. And if you want a doctor, I'll examine every inch of you. If you want a driver, climb inside. Or if you want to take me for a ride, you know you can. I'm your man. Ah, the moon's too bright. The chain's too tight. The beast won't go to sleep. I've been running through these promises to you, that I made and I could not keep. But a man never got a woman back, not by begging on his knees. Or I'd crawl to you baby. And I'd fall at your feet. And I'd howl at your beauty, like a dog in heat. And I'd claw at your heart. And I'd tear at your sheet. I'd say please, please. I'm your man. And if you've got to sleep a moment on the road, I will steer for you. And if you want to work the street alone, I'll disappear for you. If you want a father for your child or only want to walk with me a while, across the sand, I'm your man".

If you... So you want me to be a whore on the road in a picturesque landscape. I am not an object. I do not preserve with day cream or a facelift. In the meantime Rachel Kushner had written *The Flamethrowers* (2013), which was called macho by a man. I haven't read it. According to a famous art critic, this book is worth reading. Veronica Brovall titled her works with sentences from the previous song, as if she had cut the sentences out of the song with a chisel and then had incorporated them in metal and ceramic, which she poured into the oven, probably hoping for some other alchemy. Some titles include: *Climb Inside*, *I'm your man*, *The beast won't go to sleep*, *Like a dog in heat* and *To work the street alone* (2015). These titles are intolerant of generosity. Instead of portraying two lesbians - in a similar situation - Veronica Brovall portrays the "*bloody beastly*" of fascism, the asexuality of fascists, which is projected on the Jew, the intelligent woman, the lesbian, the gypsy, the gay and now also on others. Hitler hung in his office - not that much work was done there - the image of two sculptured lesbians: it doesn't get more classic than that. Evidently their sexual behaviour cannot be visualised. The question is: why do third parties think everything has to be interpreted? It is exhausting, not very fascinating. Something floats around anonymously and converts everything into shit. Brovall decided to lure it into her trap. The unportrayable was captured in the trap of an image. Yes, yes, yes, we know that you are all waiting for the fascist female leader who deals with this Stalinist regime and the corruption so that you could claim the opposite. That ingrained jealousy that adds nothing, always reduces and marginalises, that someone else is always accused of... I am tired of it. Is your (expensive)

education, mine delivered for free, unlearned? Evidently, at present it is. Veronica Brovall thereby shows the “thing” as a “thing-object”. One can deal with it. That could eventually be associated with a turbo-philosophy, at least if you take the time. When I saw it, I wondered “why didn’t that happen already?” In her work she excels at colourful, glazed ceramics and elegant, welded metal. That can be inferred from the way she combined the first series of works with a painter-like skin colour in camouflage and entangles the second group of sculptures with photographic, picturesque images that are used as the basis for a sculpture so fiery tongues can be attached to a wall elsewhere. Brovall connects media technology and craftsmanship, poetry and aggression, with so much more in her exhibition. It cannot actually be combined in any work; it seems to be thought but it isn’t understood. Company... invite. Otherwise we continue to float ‘between the acts’. Women with a sore throat have died from that. No penis will actually make that undone for everyone. Take it from me. The bobber needs a fishing line. Long live the penis! A cunt stood up here; it’s lucky that she cannot be called a fucking bitch. Veronica Brovall’s work is not self-expressive or animistic. She has represented something that couldn’t be thought. Veronica Brovall is very ambitious, but don’t treat her like a child! Everything is pursued and followed. We/she must reconcile ourselves/herself to this without calling it a day. Surrender to... Don’t hand over, produce something. The problems have been captured in an image. In art history that is called representation. This is creating distance. Yes, I know, I know: there is a lot of jealousy in that noise.

I was a housewife. I was a *witch*. I was a *beguine*. I was a *femme fatale*. I was a *bitch*. I was a *pot*. I was crazy. I was also a prostitute. I became a housewife. I became a bride. I became a mother. I was an other. I had no child. I became a mistress. I became an amateur. I became a professional. You are now a ceramic pot, *bastard*. If you need soil under your feet, well fascism and a Stalinist regime are displayed on the floor and it was placed in the oven beforehand. You would probably want to call it human, all too human, behaviour. Is that a post-humane pastime that is outsourced? No, I am not making a fool of you in this goddamned hell where we are humiliated ecologically. Squandered in more than four diabolical parts. Yes, in chapters. I am simply worn out. Exhausted. A bit tired. Oh, you think this doesn’t happen in style: of course I’m not vulgar. I am more elegant than you can imagine, it seems. You should know what price I have paid: that’s something other than falling down or stopping.

Would “axes” become a synonym for “saws”?

Silence can be deadly too. “Busy, busy, busy”, you said while watching a horror film with compassion.

Go tell that to the beasts: sleep tight.

Suffering has kissed me. Desire has soothed me.

Lips. The movement of lips. When you didn’t hear what I said.

The game could start. This isn’t child’s play for amateurish professionals, *deer hunter*. *The heart was in the past a lonely hunter*.

Sofie Van Loo, August 2015